United Nations A/59/813–S/2005/342

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
24 May 2005

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 58
Maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Greece and Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the Bucharest Declaration adopted at the eighth meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the States participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) (see annex).

The Summit was held in Bucharest on 11 May 2005. On that occasion, Greece took over from Romania the Chairmanship-in-Office of SEECP for the next term.

We should be grateful if the present letter and its enclosure could be distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Adamantios Th. **Vassilakis**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Mihnea Ioan **Motoc**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Permanent Representatives of Greece and Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Bucharest Declaration adopted at the eighth meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the States participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process

The Heads of State and Government of the States participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), namely Mr. Alfred Moisiu, Mr. Borislav Paravac, Mr. Georgi Parvanov, Mr. Stjepan Mesic, Mr. Kostas Karamanlis, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Traian Basescu, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Abdullah Gul, met in Bucharest on 11 May 2005, on the occasion of the Eighth Summit of the SEECP, in order to assess the progress of SEECP during the Romanian Chairmanship (April 2004-May 2005) and envisage new ways of developing cooperation within its framework. President Vladimir Voronin was participating as observer.

Present at the meeting were the following Ministers of Foreign Affairs: Mr. Kastriot Islami, Mr. Mladen Ivanic, Mr. Petros Molyviatis, Mr. Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, Chairman-in-Office of the SEECP, Mr. Vuk Draskovic. Also participating were Mr. Nikolay Milkov, Deputy Foreign Minister, Mrs. Marija Pejcinovic Buric, State Secretary, Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, Deputy Under-Secretary and Ambassador Mr. Tihomir Ilievski. Mr. Andrei Stratan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, participated as observer.

Also participating as special guests were: Mr. Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Mr. Jan Kubis, OSCE Secretary General, Mr. Klaus Schumann, Director General, Council of Europe, Mr. Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, Mr. Lawrence Rossin, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Deputy Head of UNMIK, Mr. William Hill, Head of OSCE Mission to Moldova, and Mr. Alexandru Ionas, Acting Director of the SECI Center.

Reaffirming the importance of further improving regional cooperation in order to ensure lasting peace, stability and economic prosperity in the SEECP participating States and for strengthening the political profile of SEECP as "the voice of the region par excellence" and as a driving force to European and Euro-Atlantic integration;

Reaffirming their commitment to act jointly towards achieving the aims and principles embodied in the Bucharest Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe and all relevant SEECP documents;

Sharing the understanding that significant progress in promoting democracy, market economy and a strong civil society in the SEECP participating States has been achieved and remains a prerequisite to enhance cooperation at the regional level;

Recognizing that SEECP participating States face common risks and challenges that require increased cooperation for an adequate response;

The Heads of State and Government of the States participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process:

1. *Express* their deep regrets for the death of Pope John Paul II, who will be remembered for his excellent leadership of the Catholic Church and strengthening peace, freedom, democracy and the respect for human rights.

2. *Welcome* the achievements made during the Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office in enhancing the political profile of the SEECP as the genuine "voice of the region" or partner of dialogue with other regional structures. The meetings at the level of Ministers, Political Directors, as well as other SEECP events organized during this period, have contributed to strengthening the cooperation between the participating States and to enlarging the area of their joint endeavour.

3. *Welcome* the Republic of Croatia's full-fledged participation in the SEECP and the Republic of Moldova's participation in the SEECP activities with observer status. We took note of the recent application of the Republic of Moldova to become a participating state. We have tasked the Committee of Political Directors to review favourably this request in the light of the Bucharest Charter and its Annex and report in time with the aim of adopting a decision in the next SEECP Summit.

4. *Welcome* the progress achieved in the European integration processes of the States in the region, as reflected in the EU Council's decisions during the past months.

5. *Recognize* the significance of the activities developed under the framework of the Adriatic Charter as a valuable instrument designed to support the member States endeavour to join NATO as well as the importance of sustained efforts by the interested participating States towards accession to the Partnership for Peace. We shall continue to support their efforts through the MAP process.

6. In the context of enhanced regional stability as a major precondition for advancement of democratic processes, the participating States *stress* the importance of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. In addition, we underline the principles of respect for international law and uphold of dialogue as means for peaceful settlement of disputes.

7. *Express* their commitment to consolidate the role of the SEECP as a platform of European and Euro-Atlantic integration for the participating States and, to that end, to join efforts for enhancing cooperation in relevant areas, such as justice and home affairs. In doing so, the SEECP participating States will encourage initiatives originating from the South-Eastern European region.

8. *Emphasize* their commitment to continue to develop the military dimension of the regional cooperation in South-East Europe, by building upon the positive experience resulted from the organization of the Conference on Defence Conversion (Bucharest, March 2005).

9. *Reiterate* their resolve to further cooperate in fighting non-conventional threats to the regional security and stability, such as terrorism, organized crime, corruption, illegal trafficking in all its aspects, and *recognize*, in this respect, the importance of the initiative launched under the Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office, concerning the Joint Campaign against Organized Crime and Corruption. Continued efforts should be made in order to increase the effectiveness of this campaign at full regional scale, including through coordination with national initiatives and programmes, so as to

properly address the challenges facing the SEECP participating States. The work of the Consultation Group on Fighting Organized Crime and Corruption, as part of the mechanism designed to support the implementation of the campaign, has proved useful. *Recognize* the importance of ratifying the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

10. *Express* their intention to support increased and more effective cooperation between the Regional Center for Combating Trans-border Crime in Bucharest (the SECI Center) and the European Union's specialized institutions, as a means to sustain the latter's actions against corruption and organized crime. Express their support for the speedy elaboration of the Action Plan, as mentioned in the March 18 Resolution of the Joint Cooperation Committee of the SECI Center, which includes drafting a new legal base for the functioning and future development of the Center.

11. While aiming to achieve European standards, we reaffirmed the importance of modernization of border control and facilitation and harmonization of visa regimes, respecting European Union commitments of the participating States.

12. *Reaffirm* their commitment to strengthen economic cooperation within the South-Eastern European region, through increasing the volume of trade, promoting business partnerships and implementing joint projects with regional impact.

13. *Reiterate* their will to continue the implementation of internal economic reforms so as to ensure the improvement of national and regional business-friendly environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises.

While addressing the problem of unemployment and under-employment, a priority remains the adoption of the necessary measures aimed at promoting efficient, job creating entrepreneurship and for increasing employment in the region as highlighted during the Conference on Entrepreneurship and Employment in South-Eastern Europe, organized in May 2004 under the aegis of the Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office.

Reconfirm that there is an urgent need for structural reforms and policies establishing social cohesion both at national and regional levels.

Also *reconfirm* their determination to take the necessary steps for harmonizing the national legislation with the *acquis communautaire* and preparing the economies in order to meet the objectives of the EU newly-proposed "Growth and Jobs" Strategy.

14. *Express* their readiness to sign and ratify as soon as possible the Treaty establishing the Energy Community in South-Eastern Europe, as the fulfilment of the Athens Process.

15. Taking account of the irreversibility of the European integration processes under way for the South-East European countries, the paramount importance of the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans, as well as the objective necessity for more efficient links with the European Union being a basic precondition for a lasting stabilization of the region;

Taking account of the forecast expressed by the EU that by 2020, the volume of traffic between the EU and its current neighbours is expected to double;

Considering that the realization of regional infrastructure projects of international interest will contribute to strengthening good-neighbourly relations and communication among the peoples in the region;

Convinced that complete economic growth and prosperity in the region are impossible without comprehensive activity for reconstruction, construction and connection of the regional infrastructure;

Wishing to facilitate the international transportation of passengers, goods and energy resources through the construction of a modern, environmentally friendly, highly efficient regional infrastructure;

Acknowledging regional infrastructure's importance for fostering tourism in South-Eastern Europe and transforming the region into a desired destination for people from all around the world;

Relying on the progress of social and economic reforms, the consolidation of democracy and the state of law achieved by the countries in the region;

Expressing dissatisfaction with the current status of the regional infrastructure and the lack of significant investments in this area;

We highly appreciate the draft *Declaration of the SEECP participating States on the development of the regional infrastructure* submitted by the Republic of Bulgaria and taking note that the next Chairmanship-in-Office will organize a Ministerial Meeting on Trans-European Networks of Transport, Energy and Telecommunications in South-Eastern Europe, we ask the Ministers to work on the proposal, either to be adopted at the mentioned meeting or to be endorsed at the next SEECP Summit.

16. The participants acknowledge the strategic importance of the Danube, a European river, linking countries that share the same interests and goals. They express their commitment to make full use of the potential for economic, environmental, cultural cooperation that the Danube provides to the development of the South-Eastern European region.

17. *Reaffirm* their commitment to explore opportunities for increased regional cooperation in areas such as environment protection, social protection, health, education, tourism and other fields of mutual interest, which became priorities in South-East Europe.

18. *Reaffirm* their readiness to continue cooperation between the SEECP and other regional initiatives, and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe in particular. In this respect the cooperation with the Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative and the Stability Pact Initiative for fighting against Organized Crime has proven useful.

Confirm their interest to launch initiatives of cooperation with the Black Sea riparian States, including through the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), in various projects of mutual interest.

19. *Welcome* with satisfaction the improvement and positive developments of regional cooperation in the field of migration, asylum and refugees and, in this regard, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding of the MARRI Regional Forum, and the establishment of the Regional MARRI Center in Skopje, as well as the conclusions of the MARRI Ministerial Conference held in Tirana (5 April 2005).

Consider this development as an important achievement aimed at promoting the concept of SEECP "regional ownership and leadership".

20. *With regard to the situation in Kosovo they express their support* of the full implementation of the standards policy, respect of the Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), and call for a renewed and constructive dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The process of standards' evaluation and the commencement of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo as well as the establishment of a democratic and multi-ethnic society are of great significance for the region's overall stability.

21. *Emphasize* the importance to continue to organize regionally a reflection process, also at think-tank level on the developments and perspective of Kosovo.

22. *Welcome* the consolidation of SEECP's parliamentary dimension and praise the results of the Conference of the Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs and European Integration Committees from the national Parliaments of the SEECP Participating States (March 2005) as reflected in the respective adopted documents.

23. *Share* the view that the SEECP activities both at the European and international level need to be more visible and consider that dialogue should be continued on the enhancement of the SEECP, while transforming the Process into a genuine policy maker.

We welcome the intention of the incoming Greek Chairmanship-in-Office to give impetus to the cooperation process by enhancing its political visibility and present proposals for reinforcing its institutional capacity. We also took note of the willingness of the next Greek Chairmanship-in-Office to present concrete proposals on the issue of a SEECP Secretariat.

24. *Encourage* the creation of the SEECP official website, as a step forward to raise the public awareness on SEECP activities.

25. *We reiterate* our strong and unequivocal condemnation of the acts of terrorism in Iraq, resulting in loss of innocent civilians and hostage takings of people from our countries and we *reaffirm* our strong support to international efforts aimed at defeating this global threat.

26. *Express* their solidarity with the Bulgarian nurses sentenced in Libya and call for additional diplomatic efforts to obtain their earliest possible release, underlining at the same time their sympathy with infected Libyan children and their families.

Express their sadness for the losses caused by the floods affecting Romania and Serbia and Montenegro, and support the actions meant to minimize the damages and suffering of the population living around the border.

27. *Express* their gratitude to President Traian Basescu, the Government and the people of Romania, for the warm hospitality extended to them during the Eighth Summit Meeting of the South-East European Cooperation Process in Bucharest.

28. *We decide* that during the period 2006-2007 the Chairman-in-Office will be H.E. Mrs. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

29. *Welcome* the incoming Greek Chairmanship-in-Office, and decide that the next meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP countries will be held in Thessaloniki in 2006.

Bucharest, 11 May 2005